

Safer & Stronger Communities Board– Councillor Simon Blackburn (Chair)

Serious Violence Taskforce Meeting

1. In July, I attended the Serious Violence Taskforce meeting which focused on relationships education for children and young people. I called for a greater focus on the impact of watching online pornography and the effect that violent online content can have on children and younger people, and how this affects their views of healthy relationships. In addition to this, the LGA submitted written evidence to the Home Affairs Committee as part of their inquiry into [serious violence](#). In our response, we highlighted the importance of investing in early intervention and prevention, as well as taking a multi-agency approach to tackling this important issue.

Anti-Social Behaviour – Independent Group Seminar

2. At the Independent Group meeting, Cllr Clive Woodbridge spoke about the importance of addressing anti-social behaviour in local communities and forming strong partnerships with neighbourhood police officers. There were presentations from the Manifesto Club and the London Anti-Social Behaviour Advisory Service.

Meeting with the Food Standards Agency

3. In September, I met with Heather Hancock, Chair of the Food Standards Agency, to discuss issues impacting on local authorities' food work. The expansion of the National Food Crime Unit will link closely with trading standards' work on food standards, but Heather emphasised that the FSA intend the work of the NFCU to complement rather than duplicate the work councils are already doing. The FSA's Regulating our Future programme is developing proposals that could significantly change the approach to regulating food businesses, and Heather agreed to attend the next meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board to provide a full update.

Extremism

4. In September I wrote to Baroness Williams, Minister of State for Countering Extremism, to raise a number of issues regarding national efforts, including responding to evolving threats from extremism, particularly far-right extremism; the need for adequate support for local authorities who do not currently receive specialist Home Office funding for counter extremism work; and the role of the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE) in helping to develop local government's response. I will be meeting with Baroness Williams shortly to discuss these in more detail.

FGM

National FGM Centre Advisory Board

5. On 24 September, Deputy-Chair Cllr Anita Lower (Community Cohesion Champion and Chair of the National FGM Centre (NFGMC) Advisory Board) Chaired the National FGM Centre Advisory Group. The meeting included a full workshop on sustainability of the National FGM Centre given by Department of Education Innovation Coach, Heather Rolinson and resulted in broad agreement to consider partnership working in more detail at future meetings.

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US/UK Proclamation of Interagency Support

6. In August, Cllr Lower also attended the American Embassy in London with lead NFGMC officers and other 'Honour-based' abuse leads where the US/UK Proclamation of Interagency Support for FGM/Cutting investigations was signed. This agreement formalised an international law enforcement partnership to enhance knowledge of, and the response to FGM/C.

NFGMC Consultation Event

7. Following the successful launch of the National FGM Centre's FGM risk assessment tool in Manchester and London earlier this year, Cllr Lower and lead officers of the NFGMC hosted a consultation event in Cardiff in October aimed at showcasing the tool to relevant members of Welsh government and local government with an aim to making it relevant under Welsh legislation.

Enhancing Community Safety Through Effective Local Policing Forum

8. In October, Vice-Chairman Cllr Bright spoke at the Inside Government Conference on enhancing the relationship between the police and local authorities. He spoke about the importance of strong partnerships and multi-agency working to tackle crime. On serious violent crime, he said that early intervention and prevention would be key to tackling the root causes of serious violence.

Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC)

Meeting with Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service

9. On the 11 September, Cllr Ian Stephens, Chair of the FSMC, attended the HMICFRS External Reference Group. The group considered the ongoing round of inspections of Fire and Rescue Services and Cllr Stephens particularly contributed to a discussion on the framework for corporate inspection which HMICFRS are currently developing. On the 17 September Cllr Stephens met with senior officers from HMICFRS again to give more feedback on the proposed framework and triggers for corporate inspections of Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Meeting with the Fire Industry Association's Fire and Rescue Suppliers (FIRESA)

10. On the 17 September Cllr Stephen also met with James Jones, Chair of the FIRESA Council. They discussed the improvement procurement framework and quality assurance for products across the Fire sector.

Meeting with Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP)

11. On the 3 September Cllr Nick Chard, Deputy-Chair of the Fire Services Management Committee, attended the JESIP Interoperability Board. The group discussed the need to continue to promote the collection of good practice through the Joint Organisational Learning online platform.

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Modern Slavery

Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry on Modern Slavery

12. In September the Board submitted the LGA's response to the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry on modern slavery, which highlighted councils role and the current barriers they face in tackling modern slavery. This included the impact of the funding gap on wider services and lack of affordable housing.

House of Commons debate on Tackling Modern-day Slavery

13. In early October, ahead of the House of Commons debate on [Tackling Modern-day Slavery](#), we briefed relevant parliamentarians on these same issues highlighting the ambiguities faced by councils due to the lack of published guidance from councils and the increasing concern of county lines linked to modern slavery.

Taxi Licensing

14. In September, the cross-industry working group that was set-up to look at Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) licensing published a [report](#) with a number of recommendations for government. The LGA was pleased to participate in the working group and that many of our asks were included in the report's recommendations. Government is expected to respond later this year and we will continue to lobby for the much-needed legislative reform we have campaigned for.

Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs)

15. I gave evidence to the APPG on FOBTs on 12 September, highlighting the impact on local communities of delaying the £2 stake reduction of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals.
16. In October Vice-Chairman, Cllr Morris Bright, joined a panel discussion on the impact of delaying the £2 stake reduction of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals at a fringe event at Conservative Party Conference.

Media Roundup

17. Since the last Forum, I have given comments in the following press releases on behalf of the Board:
- 17.1. [Response to government launch of FGM awareness campaign](#)
 - 17.2. [LGA responds to Sajid Javid announcement on funding to tackle serious violence](#)
 - 17.3. [Councils issue warning about sale of illegal toxic cosmetics](#)
 - 17.4. [LGA responds to a new strategy introduced by the Office for Product Safety and Standards](#)
 - 17.5. [LGA responds to Which? report on unidentifiable fire risk appliances](#)
 - 17.6. [Heatwave: bathers warned of drowning risk following recent deaths](#)
 - 17.7. [Delay to FOBT stake cut could cost gamblers £3 billion](#)



Councillors' Forum

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